



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE STATE'S ATTORNEY FOR HOWARD COUNTY

For Immediate Release:

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Columbia Man Pleads Guilty to Series of Vehicle Tire and Rim Thefts

A Columbia man arrested last year in a series of auto tire and rim thefts across Howard County, has pleaded guilty. Deaundre T. Wallace, 27 of the 7000 block of Deepage Drive, pleaded guilty to a single count of theft scheme between \$10,000 and \$100,000 in Howard County Circuit Court this morning.

According to police and prosecutors, between June and August of 2017, residents from Columbia, Ellicott City, Jessup and Laurel discovered their vehicles resting on concrete blocks with the tires and rims missing. Assistant State's Attorney Dillon Yeung told the court that police obtained a court-ordered GPS tracking device and planted it on a vehicle associated with suspects identified during the course of their investigation. Shortly thereafter, the vehicle was tracked to the 8000 block of Oakton Lane in Ellicott City where detectives observed Wallace remove four tires and rims, and place them into the vehicle driven by Arooj Wilson. The couple then drove to a Laurel motel where they stored the tires and rims in their motel room. A search and seizure warrant was executed, and police discovered two complete sets of tires and rims, a mechanical jack, a hydraulic jack and heavy-duty work gloves. Wallace and Wilson were arrested and in a mirandized interview with police, Wallace admitted to 10 separate thefts.

Judge Timothy J. McCrone sentenced Wallace to five years in prison, suspending all but 90 days, and acknowledged that Wallace had no prior convictions and that the plea represented the top of the sentencing guidelines. Wallace must also make restitution totaling \$3,650 to the victims, for their out-of-pocket insurance deductibles. Arooj Wilson, 27 of the 10000 block of Hickory Ridge Road, pleaded guilty to a single charge of being a rogue and vagabond under the burglary statute on January 22 and received a three-year, fully-suspended sentence, ordered to perform 100 hours of community service and was placed on three years of supervised probation

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